

Eastern MRS Meeting  
Wilson County DSS  
February 15, 2005

**Attendees:**

State Staff: Tony Troop, Tea Henderson, Mark Morgan, Gale Trevathan, Gwen Burns, Tony Amos, Diane Chavis, Kim Harman, Catherine (trainer at AFI)

Counties: Currituck, Bladen, Durham, Franklin, Harnett, Johnston, Martin, Nash, Orange, Pasquotank, Scotland, Warren, Wilson.

**Agenda**

Division Stuff

Training/Letters

General Announcements

Documentation what/why

How do social workers do it

How do Supervisors review it

Training/Administrative Letters

- DV policy training started, reminder that the 52 are only priority until 6/30/04
- Meth training should start mid March
- Web Based Training letter was sent out with schedule, counties can swap with each other if they work it out amongst themselves and let Heather know
- Post Adoption Service letter 2/10
- Work First 2005-2007 TANF state plan, TANF participation rates

Announcements

- Laura Elmore is now the drug endangered children coordinator. Her old policy consultant position now vacant and will be posted
- 2 full time training positions open in Kinston
- MRS policy consultant position (Tony's former position) open home based

*Bogus or Malicious Reports*

- There has been a lot of discussion about malicious reports. Referred to as bogus reports in policy and discussed in original MRS manual.
- If case is assigned Family Assessment and the SW goes to the home and sees that there is clearly no issue, still have to complete the tool (and interviews collaterals if necessary\*). Then can disengage from the family. (\*Note: If you complete assessment and you were able to accurately

assess safety issues without having to interview collaterals you should not be penalized in a Review.)

- Bogus reports have nothing to do with assessing reporters motive. If the report fits the 3 categories (juvenile, caretaker, abuse/neglect/dependency) then agency has to take it. Basically, issue of bogus/malicious reporting does not affect intake
- General Assembly charged us to look at reporting structure therefore a survey sent to all counties asking for numbers of reports considered bogus .
- 5104 will change to track reasons decision was made to unsubstantiated or substantiate and reason(s) why people did not report.

### **Documentation**

- Tony has heard that caseloads and documentation are barriers to good service provision
- Nash and Currituck counties brought handouts that they use to organize/simplify documentation. (Tony has copies)
  - Nash helps in case management, the form is filled out for each visit, it helps keep worker focused on the purpose of each visit. Also just started using a letter to share with the family that explains how they will use collaterals and CFT when they transfer to case management.
  - Currituck use their form for assigning cases, updated at weekly staffings includes basic summary information for each case

### *Why do we do documentation?*

- To record family history to ensure child safety in the future
- Proof of reasonable efforts important to show court, to fund cases IVE
- To protect liability for reviews, etc.

### *What does documentation look like?*

- Lots of narrative
- Currituck - forms with check boxes (question was asked if using check boxes rather than narrative has an effect when you need to recall situations for testimony etc. County said no, the checked format helps keep folks on track during visits.)
- Nash sheet where workers can fill in dates for a summary
- Wilson uses carbon forms to give family a copy

### *What makes good documentation?*

- Concise in language and format, may have a template that can be expanded on if necessary Guided Information Gathering
- Factual info as it related to CPS issues
- Avoid repeating information
- Provides a clear picture of the issues and how they were addressed
- Logical, addresses questions that led to other questions chronological

- Legible
- Highlight home visits, phone calls, office visits, etc. so that someone reviewing the record can easily locate specific parts of the record
- If abbreviations are used they are consistent, preferably one agency wide key so that each SW is not using their own set of abbreviations

#### *Management/Agency Expectations*

- Workers know what is important with regard to CPS issues and underlying factors so that they know what to report

#### *How does this happen – how does the work get done?*

- Laptop use so they can keep up with documentation while in field
- Using bullets rather than complete sentences
- Carrying dictaphone with them
- Have a check box on day sheet verifying that documentation completed
- Flextime including: day to work at home (by the volume of paperwork turned in after these days counties know workers are really working during these days), Queen or King for a day (do not have to take any calls that day)
- Giving deadlines for when paperwork due and supervisors checking it

#### *What re the barriers to making it happen?*

- Unexpected crisis in an already open case
- Time management lack of time, or lack of time management skills
- Vacancies/turnover
- Dual or mixed caseloads (hard to switch gears)
- Other obligations (court, CFT meetings, staffings)
- Paperwork may not be as high a priority to the agency or the supervisor
- Hard to concentrate at office if you are in a cube, or share an office, especially when your officemate is interviewing clients.

#### *How to overcome the barriers?*

- How does an agency get to the point of implementing the flexible things?
  - Flextime, particularly working at home requires the support of the Director who must be confident in the ability of the supervisors to ensure that workers are working at home
- Consider having some dedicated interview rooms so that clients are not coming into office, particular when those are shared
- Making sure that paperwork complete when a SW leaves when someone gives notice make a check list of things they must complete before leaving in order to receive last check
- Regular reviewing of records by supervisors
  - Supervisors said this is typically done when cases transferred, case closure, random monthly pulling of case(s)
- Ensure supervisors know what cases are open and who is assigned to them (dry erase board, database, case log)

- Group wanted to have some minimal documentation guidelines/format from the state. Currently all 100 counties are each re-inventing the wheel and still unsure about reviews. (Example: How do you connect the checks on the risk/safety assessment tool to actions taken with the family?)
- Think about who would be willing to participate in the development of such a tool (and agree to use it if it was developed)?
- Tony will see if someone from the review team can attend a future meeting

#### *Future Meetings*

- No meeting of the 52 in March, will wait until the Training Institute in June to meet as a group.
- Regional meetings in March, next meeting here will be Monday March 21<sup>st</sup> from 10-1 (have to leave room by 1pm.)